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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session

Observer status for United Cities and Local Governments in the General Assembly

Letter dated 28 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Turkey highly appreciates your leadership in regard to recognition of the role of local and regional governments in achieving sustainable development. Turkey also acknowledges that you prioritize sound urban strategies, balanced regional development policies and strengthened economic and legal frameworks for cities on the United Nations agenda.

Local and regional governments and their national associations work together at the international level through United Cities and Local Governments, which shares the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

You may recall that H.E. Mr. Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul and member of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, is leading this global organization of local authorities.

Members of United Cities and Local Governments are committed to taking responsibility and action in shaping the future we want. The activities of United Cities and Local Governments can complement and support the work of the United Nations, in particular the follow-up process of the Rio+20 Conference and the development and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Turkey strongly believes that cooperation between the United Nations and United Cities and Local Governments needs to be promoted. Granting non-governmental observer status for United Cities and Local Governments in the General Assembly would be an important step to this effect.

In this context, Turkey would like to request the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Observer status for United Cities and Local Governments in the General

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Assembly". In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution are attached hereto (see annexes).

Turkey stands ready to work with the relevant departments of the Secretariat in this process. I am confident that you will spare no effort to support this initiative which will provide many benefits for global development endeavours.

I should appreciate it if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ertuğrul **Apakan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

United Cities and Local Governments currently gathers together 153 national and regional associations of local authorities from over 140 United Nations Member States, which represent three quarters of the world population. This makes United Cities and Local Governments a leading organization representing local and regional (subnational) governments internationally. United Cities and Local Governments is also in first-hand contact with leaders and national Governments regarding urban and subnational issues.

United Cities and Local Governments is a membership-based international association that has its seat in Barcelona, Spain. It operates as a non-profit organization of local authorities for the public benefit.

United Cities and Local Governments is the inheritor of a century-old international movement of local and regional governments and their national associations dating back to 1913 which organized the first World Assembly of Local Authorities and Cities in 1996 on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul.

The organization shares the principles and objectives of the United Nations. The activities of United Cities and Local Governments complement and support the work of the United Nations towards achieving sustainable development, through working relations with the relevant agencies of the United Nations.

Local governments are recognized as key stakeholders in the policy-making of the United Nations by rule 64 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, which is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. United Cities and Local Governments has observer status in the Council.

Furthermore, paragraph 44 of the outcome document of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) and paragraph 174 of the Outcome of the Millennium+5 Summit (General Assembly resolution 60/1, annex) provide the foundation for furthering cooperation between the two international organizations.

Local governments have a long history of cooperation with the United Nations through United Cities and Local Governments. Founding local government organizations of United Cities and Local Governments have held non-governmental organization consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1947. United Cities and Local Governments is the formal representative of those constituencies before numerous bodies:

(a) Local authorities are identified as one of nine "major groups" in Agenda 21;

(b) Local governments have further achieved recognition at major United Nations and international meetings, such as Beijing +10, the Millennium +5 Summit of Heads of State and Government and the World Water Forums;

(c) Local government representatives have a special relationship with UN-Habitat and through rule 64 of its rules of procedure have distinct rights to participate as observers in the Governing Council of UN-Habitat;

(d) In 2000, the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities was established as a body of elected local representatives that advises the Executive Director of UN-Habitat. The President of United Cities and Local Governments is the Permanent Chair of this Committee;

(e) United Cities and Local Governments has been asked to advise the High-level Group for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to ensure that the views of the world's mayors and councillors are taken into account in its report to the General Assembly;

(f) The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has invited United Cities and Local Governments to the Advisory Board of the Development Cooperation Forum;

(g) United Cities and Local Governments represented local and regional authorities in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Working Party on Aid Effectiveness;

(h) In 2010, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its 16th session, acknowledged local authorities as governmental stakeholders in issues related to the climate change agreements;

(i) The President of United Cities and Local Governments and Mayor of Istanbul was appointed in July 2012 to the United Nations Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Process.

United Cities and Local Governments has cooperation agreements and working relations with most of the United Nations agencies, for example UN-Habitat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and with the World Bank. There are further agreements under way with UN-Women and the International Labour Organization.

The aspiration of United Cities and Local Governments is to build on the example of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which has enjoyed observer status since 2002, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32, based on the unique and intergovernmental character of its constituency.

As is the case with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the membership of United Cities and Local Governments represents a level of government in the respective countries. The membership of United Cities and Local Governments is institutional, as it is cities, regions, towns and associations that join the world organization. The members of United Cities and Local Governments are therefore directly accountable to the citizens, just as national Governments are.

United Cities and Local Governments could become a catalyst for the collaboration and representation of local and regional authorities. It would enable multiple existing voices to contribute to shaping political and technical positions.

In view of the post-2015 development process and the convening of a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016, observer status for United Cities and Local Governments would significantly contribute to finding solutions for the global challenges that are being faced.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for United Cities and Local Governments in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994,

Considering the unique status of United Cities and Local Governments as a world organization of local and regional governments,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and United Cities and Local Governments,

1. *Decides* to invite United Cities and Local Governments to participate in its sessions and in its work in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.